



384
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BAT MAN



THE DAYS OF THE
CALENDAR MAN!

THE DOCKS: WHERE TENDRILS OF FOG SLITHER LIKE THE QUESTING GHOSTS OF SEASNAKES, AND WHERE SHIPS' HORNS MOAN, MUFFLED AND DOLOROUS.

IT IS THE 13TH OF MARCH, AND IT IS NIGHT.

ALL RIGHT -- DR. FANG IS DEAD AND IT'S THE BATMAN'S FAULT.

WE KNOW ALL THAT -- SO WHAT?

"...BECAUSE THE REMNANTS OF OUR GANG WON'T STAND A CHANCE AS LONG AS HE'S IN GOTHAM."

YOU ARE NOW LEAVING GOTHAM COME AGAIN

YEAH, BUT IF WE DON'T STAND A CHANCE AGAINST BATMAN, HOW DO WE MAKE HIM DEAD?

WE CALL THE NUMBER AND MAKE OUR OFFER.

I'M TELLING YOU, THIS "MONITOR" GUY HAS ALREADY HELPED OTHER PEOPLE IN OTHER CITIES -- AND HE CAN FIND A MATCH FOR THE BATMAN.

SO...EVEN IF FANG'S DEATH DIDN'T DEMAND VENGEANCE, WE'D STILL HAVE TO PUT THE BATMAN DOWN.

IT'S A LOT OF MONEY, BUT WE GOT NO CHOICE.

IT IS AGREED.

AND THE LIGHTS OF GOTHAM FADE TO THE REAR.

AGREED?

G-1854

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Phil & Doc Scan

WHILE, IN A SATEL-
LITE ORBITING THE
EARTH...



THE CALL
FROM GOTHAM
YOU'VE BEEN
EXPECTING --
IT JUST
CAME IN.

AH, YES,
LYLA... THE
MATCH FOR
BATMAN.

THIS ONE SHOULD PROVE INTERESTING
ON SEVERAL LEVELS... BUT I BELIEVE
I'VE ALREADY MONITORED THE
APPROPRIATE PAWN.

SHALL WE
CONTACT
HIM?



WE
SHALL.

BROKEN DATES

Doug Moench
WRITER
John Workman
LETTERER

Rick Hoberg and Rudy Nebres
ARTISTS

Adrienne Roy
COLORIST

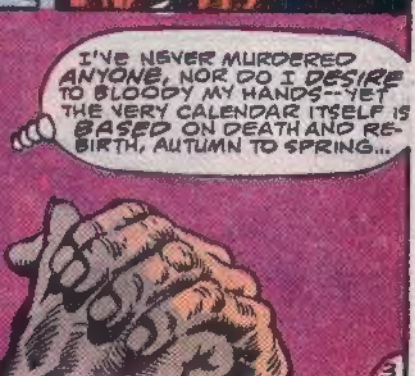
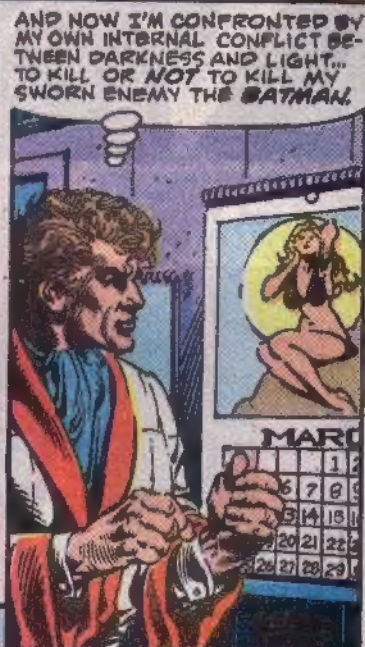
Len Wein
EDITOR

AND TWO DAYS LATER,
AT SUNSET ON THE
15TH-- THE IDES OF
MARCH-- THE OFFER
MADE BY THE LATE
DR. FANG'S CRONIES,
AS RELAYED BY THE
MYSTERIOUS MONI-
TOR, IS STILL BEING
PONDERED BY HE
WHO CALLS HIMSELF
CALENDAR MAN.

AND THUS DOES
THE EVENING SKY--IN
WHICH THE SUN AND
THE MOON CROSS
PATHS--ILLUSTRATE
THE BASIC CONFLICT
OF THE CALENDAR...



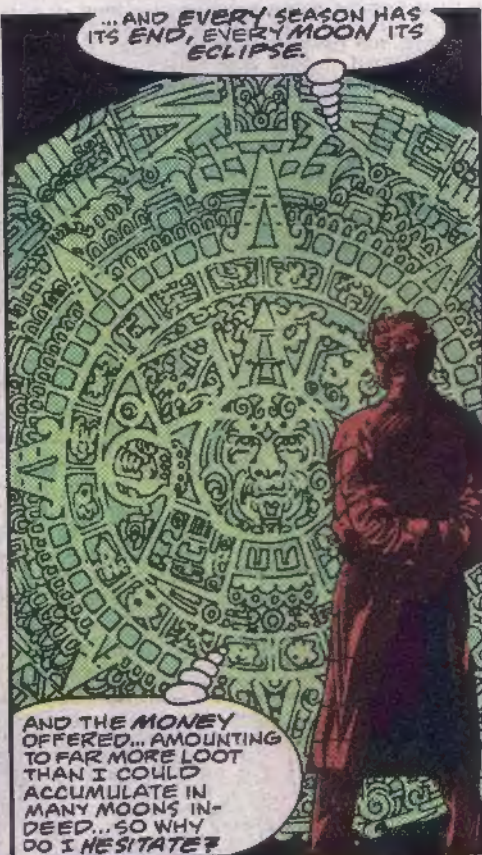
...EVEN AS A
SIMILAR
CONFLICT OF
LIGHT AND DARK-
NESS IS MIRRORED
IN MY OWN MIND
AND HEART.





INDEED, THE SUN
DIES AND IS RE-
BORN EVERY NIGHT
AND DAY--THE
MOON, EVERY
"MONTH."

WHY SHOULD I
CONTEMPLATE
DEATH WITH SUCH
DREAD? I CERTAIN-
LY POSSESS NO
MORALS OF ANY
SIGNIFICANCE...



...AND EVERY SEASON HAS
ITS END, EVERY MOON ITS
ECLIPSE.

AND THE MONEY
OFFERED... AMOUNTING
TO FAR MORE LOOT
THAN I COULD
ACCUMULATE IN
MANY MOONS IN-
DEED... SO WHY
DO I HESITATE?



COULD IT
BE THAT I
COMMIT MY
CRIMES FOR
REASONS
OTHER THAN
MONETARY
GAIN?

COULD IT BE
THAT I DERIVE
PLEASURE FROM
PASSING MY TIME
IN CHALLENGES OF
WIT AND SKILL?

COULD IT BE THAT THE
CRIME OF MURDER IS TOO
MUNDANE, TOO ARTLESS,
TO SATISFY MY NEEDS?



COULD IT BE THAT I
ACTUALLY RESPECT THE
BATMAN-- AND LOOK
FORWARD TO OUR
PERIODIC CONTESTS?



OF COURSE IT
COULD. AND WERE
I TO KILL THE
BATMAN-- RED-
LETTER DAY
ASIDE...

...THE REST OF
MY DAYS COULD
WELL BE BLANK
BOXES.

WITH THE BATMAN
DEAD, WOULD I
HAVE ANY REASON
TO LIVE?



AND YET...
THE MONEY...

AND, TOO: LET US NOT FORGET... THOUGH IT WILL BE OUR LAST SERIES OF ENCOUNTERS, THEY WILL ALSO COMPRISE THE ULTIMATE CONTEST.

A TIME LIMIT, THEN, MEASURED BY THE CALENDAR --AND FILLED WITH OUR USUAL GAME.

YES, IT'S TOO MUCH TO RESIST... BUT SINCE THE BATMAN IS DESERVING OF RESPECT, HE ALSO DESERVES A FAIR CHANCE.

HE WILL HAVE THE COURSE OF SIX CRIMES -- CULMINATING UPON THE BIRTH OF A NEW SEASON...

...AND IF HE HAS NOT STOPPED MY SPREE BY THEN--

MARCH 20
--HE WILL DIE.
MARCH 21
D-DAY!

DESPITE THE STREETCORNER'S BLUSTERY COLD, HARVEY BULLOCK IS NOT SO MUCH ANNOYED AS HE IS MYSTIFIED...

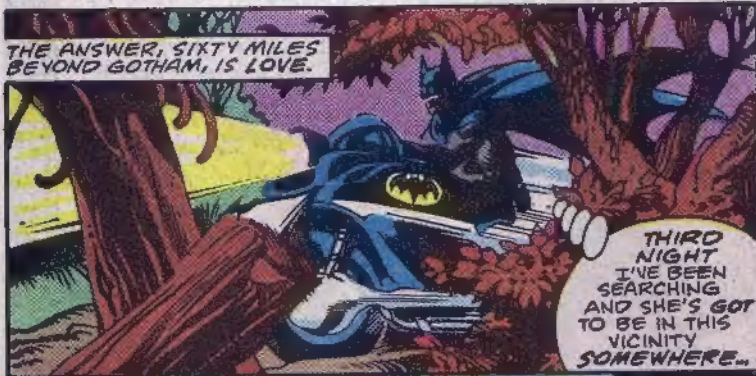
CAN'T FIGGER IT-- BATMAN WAS SUPPOSED TO MEET ME HERE TWO HOURS AGO, SO I COULD GIVE HIM THAT INFO ON FANG'S LEFT-OVER GANG...

OH WELL... MAYBE I CAN STILL CATCH THE SECOND HALF OF THE DOUBLE FEATURE AT THE REGENCY... BUT I STILL CAN'T FIGGER IT.

...BUT IT LOOKS LIKE I'M BEIN' STOOD UP.

WHAT COULD BE MORE IMPORTANT TO A GUY THAN HOT LEADS TO A BUNCH OF THUGS WHO WANT YA DEAD?

THE ANSWER, SIXTY MILES BEYOND GOTHAM, IS LOVE.



THIRD NIGHT I'VE BEEN SEARCHING AND SHE'S GOT TO BE IN THIS VICINITY SOMEWHERE...

"THE TERRORIST DARKWOLF HOLDING ALIVE GRENADE ABOARD THE JETLINER..."



"SELINA KYLE DISGUISED AS A FLIGHT ATTENDANT..."

"--LEAPING AT HIM, SNATCHING THE GRENADE FROM HIS HAND..."



"...AND THEN WAIT FOR THE INEVITABLE EXPLOSION."

"BUT WAS SHE ABLE TO THROW THE GRENADE AWAY FROM HERE? DID SHE EVEN SEE THE PARACHUTE?"



"AND THEN THE AWFUL PART-- HER LEAP CARRYING HER OUT THE OPENED EMERGENCY DOOR..."



"ALL I COULD DO WAS HURL MY PARACHUTE PACK AFTER HER..."



AND IS IT TOO MUCH TO HOPE
THAT THE CATWOMAN HAD AT
LEAST ONE OF HER NINE
LIVES REMAINING?

BUT EVEN IF SHE
DIDN'T, I CAN'T UN-
DERSTAND IT-- I
KNOW SHE CAME
OUT OF THE PLANE
OVER THIS AREA...

...AND IF I CAN'T
FIND HER BODY, I
SHOULD AT LEAST BE
ABLE TO LOCATE--

THERE!

THE PARACHUTE--
OPENED-- NOT JUST THE
FALLEN PACK-- WHICH EX-
PLAINS WHY IT'S SO FAR
OFF THE FLIGHT PATH...

IT DRIFTED
WITH THE
WIND!

AND SINCE THE
RIPCORD DIDN'T
PULL ITSELF...

YES--SHE
USED IT--SHE'S
ALIVE!

WHILE, IN
GOTHAM:

CONSIDERING
BOTH MY NAME
AND MY GAME,
I REALLY SHOULD
BE USING A
TIMED FUSE...

...BUT SINCE WE
HAVEN'T QUITE
RUNG IN THE
NEW YET...

...THE OLD-
FASHIONED TYPE
WILL DO QUITE
NICELY.

KAHBOOM

NOW TO WITHDRAW
JUST ENOUGH MONEY
TO MAKE THE CRIME
OFFICIAL-- AND TO
STAKE MY NEXT
CRIMES...

...SINCE I'M FAR TOO
SMART TO LINGER
OVERLONG WHILE THE
SILENT ALARM BRINGS
THE POLICE EVEN
NOW...

THE POLICE
AND PERHAPS THE
BATMAN.

I APOLOGIZE
FOR THE HU-
MILIATION--
BUT ONCE I
MAKE A RES-
OLUTION, I
STICK TO IT.

AN HOUR LATER:

IT'S STRANGE... BUT NOW
THAT I KNOW CATWOMAN IS
STILL ALIVE, I'M NO
LONGER OBSESSED
WITH HER.

INSTEAD, I
FIND MY THOUGHTS
TURNING ELSE-
WHERE... TO--

--eh--?

THE PORTABLE
BAT-SIGNAL
--RISING UP FROM
THE AREA OF TARLTON
SQUARE-- WHERE THE
FIRST NEW BANK
IS LOCATED.

AND SOON:

THE VAULT IS
NICKNAMED
FATHER TIME.
BATMAN...

... BECAUSE IT'S
SO OLD AND
NEVER BEEN
CRACKED--

--UNTIL
TONIGHT.

AND YOU
SAW THERE
WAS A NOTE
LEFT IN
THERE,
GORDON?

YES... ALTHOUGH
IT DOESN'T MAKE
MUCH SENSE...

IT READS:
"LIKE A NEW-
BORN BABE,
EAGER TO BE-
GIN THE ETER-
NAL GAME ANEW,
I REMAIN..."
AND IT'S
SIGNED
"PUER."

CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING.

THANKS, GORDON--
I THINK I KNOW WHO
OUR MAN IS, BUT I
WANT TO MAKE SURE.

BUT I
HAVEN'T
TOLD YOU
ABOUT THE
GUARD
YET. HE
WAS FOUND
NAKED,
EXCEPT
FOR A
BANNER
WHICH
READ...

WHY, YES...!
BUT HOW DID
YOU--

THE NICKNAME
OF THE VAULT,
GORDON--AND
THE WORD
"ETERNAL" IN
THE NOTE.

PUER AETERNUS
IS THE NAME OF THE
NAKED CHERUB WHO
TAKES FATHER TIME'S
PLACE EVERY NEW
YEAR'S EVE.

Hmp.

VRAOWW

SORRY TO
WAKE YOU,
JASON, BUT
ROBIN'S
NEEDED
DOWN AT
THE BAT-
CAVE'S
COM-
PUTERS.

TAP THE POLICE
CENTRAL DATA-
BANK AND SEE
IF CALENDAR
MAN HAS RE-
CENTLY ESCAPED
OR BEEN PAR-
OLED FROM
PRISON.

CALENDAR
MAN...YEAH
...GOT IT.

IF HE HAS,
PLUG IN THE
GOTHAM YELLOW
PAGES PROGRAM
AND CROSS-
REFERENCE IT
WITH THREE
SUBJECTS...

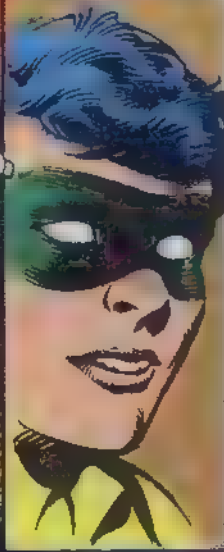
GROUNDHOG,
SHADOW, AND
SPRING...

GROUNDHOG,
SHADOW, AND
SPRING.

WHAT
KINDA
WEIRDNESS
ARE WE
CLIMBING
INTO NOW?

FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER.

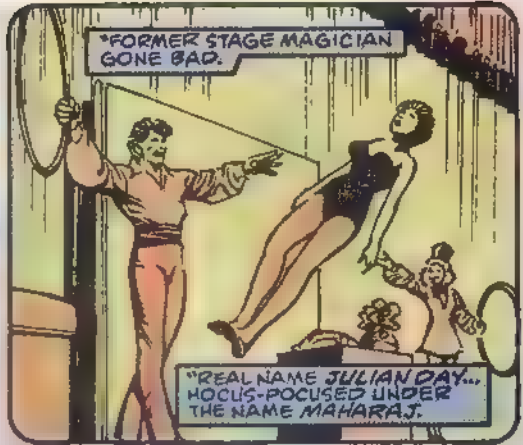
FINISHED WITH WHAT BATMAN WANTED, SO I MIGHT AS WELL ACCESS THE PRIVATE CRIME FILES AND BRUSH UP ON THIS CALENDAR MAN DUDE FOR MY OWN SAKE ..



Hmm... ACCORDING TO THIS DATA, HE'S KINDA LIKE THE RIDDLER.

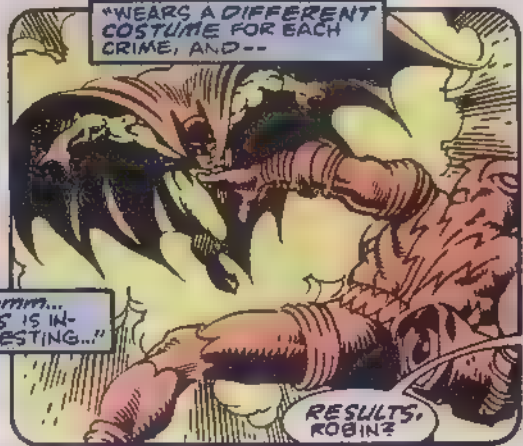


EACH OF HIS CRIMES HAS A GIMMICK, IN HIS CASE ALWAYS RELATING TO THE CALENDAR, AND HE COMMITS THEM MOSTLY FOR THE "FUN" OF GOING AGAINST BATMAN.



*FORMER STAGE MAGICIAN GONE BAD.

*REAL NAME JULIAN DAY... HOCUS-FOCUS UNDER THE NAME MAHARAJ.



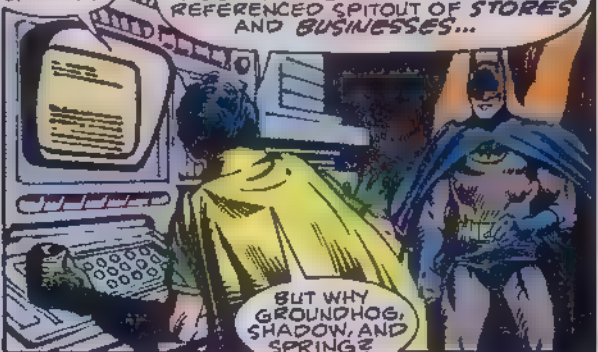
*WEARS A DIFFERENT COSTUME FOR EACH CRIME, AND--

Hmmm... THIS IS INTERESTING...

RESULTS, ROBIN?

OH--HI, BATMAN.

PAROLED THREE MONTHS AGO--AND I'VE GOT THE CROSS-REFERENCED SPITOUT OF STORES AND BUSINESSES...

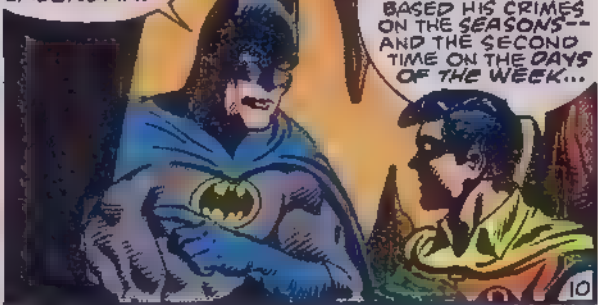


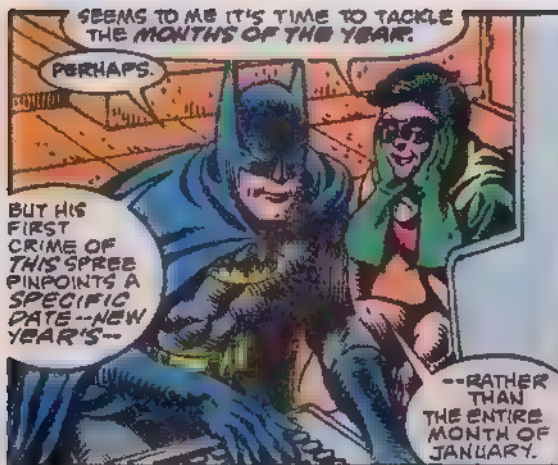
BUT WHY GROUNDHOG, SHADOW, AND SPRING?

BECAUSE GROUNDHOG DAY IS THE NEXT SIGNIFICANT DATE ON THE CALENDAR.

HUZZ!

ACCORDING TO YOUR PRIVATE FILES, YOU'VE FACED HIM TWICE SO FAR. THE FIRST TIME HE BASED HIS CRIMES ON THE SEASONS-- AND THE SECOND TIME ON THE DAYS OF THE WEEK...





SEEMS TO ME IT'S TIME TO TACKLE THE MONTHS OF THE YEAR.

PERHAPS.

BUT HIS FIRST CRIME OF THIS SPREE PINPOINTS A SPECIFIC DATE--NEW YEAR'S--

--RATHER THAN THE ENTIRE MONTH OF JANUARY.

NOW LET'S SEE WHAT THE COMPUTER KICKED OUT...

HMM...SHADOW TRICKS IS A MAGIC AND NOVELTY SUPPLY SHOP..

..CAN'T IMAGINE WHAT'S OF VALUE THERE, BUT SINCE CALENDAR MAN IS A FORMER MAGICIAN, IT'S OUR BEST BET.

OBOY, DO I GET TO PULL A RABBIT FROM A HATE

WHO KNOWS WHAT TOMORROW MAY BRING, ROBIN?

BUT SINCE WE JUST HIT BINGO, IT LOOKS LIKE YOU SUITED UP FOR NOTHING--TIME TO JUMP BACK INTO YOUR PJS AND GET SOME REST.

FOR THE BATMAN, HOWEVER, THIS NIGHT HOLDS NO REST AT ALL...

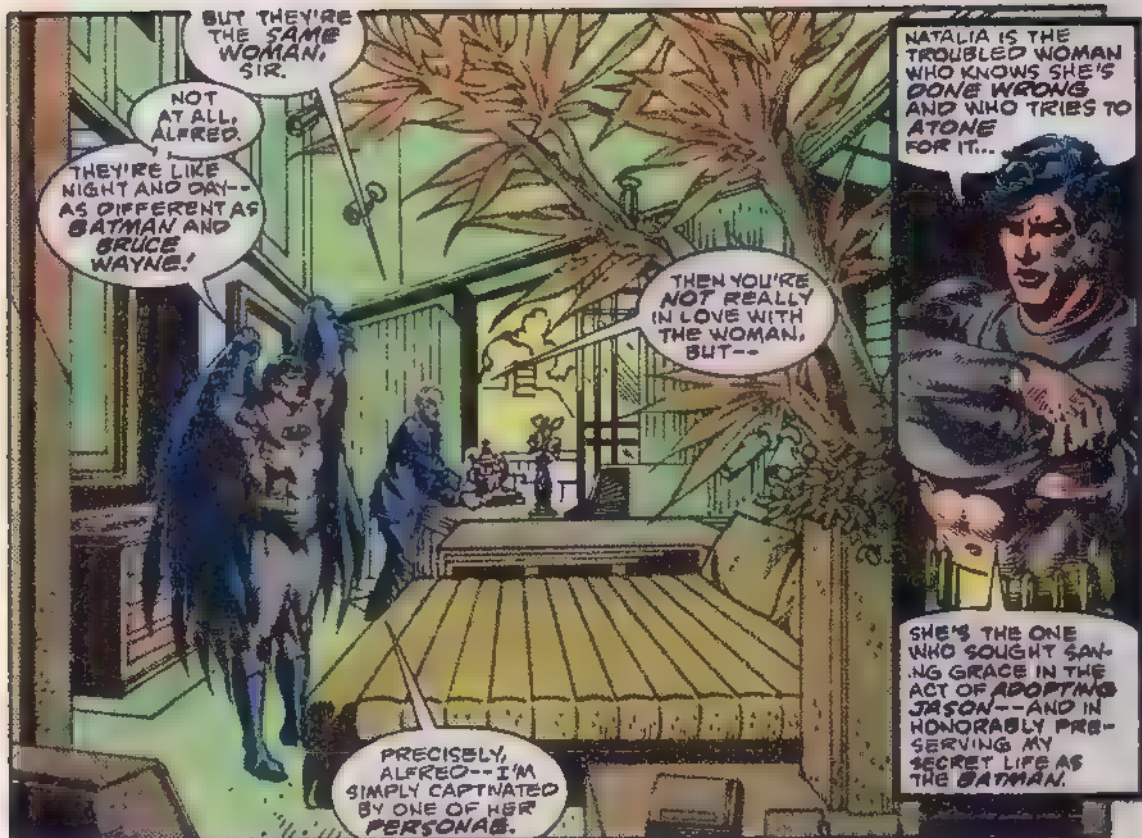
OH, GOOD MORNING, ALFRED. I WAS...JUST THINKING...

AND I'LL SEEING NATALIA KNIGHT IN THE DARKNESS BETWEEN THE STARS, SIR?

IT'S DAWN, SIR--YOUR COFFEE.

NOT NATALIA, ALFRED.

IT'S NOCTURNA I CAN'T ESCAPE.



BUT THEY'RE THE SAME WOMAN, SIR.

NOT AT ALL, ALFRED.

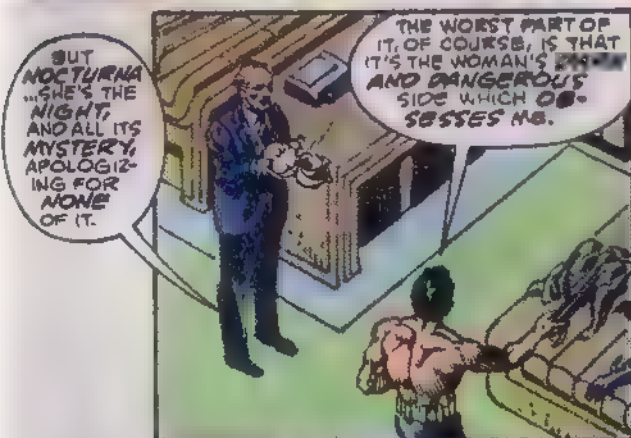
THEY'RE LIKE NIGHT AND DAY-- AS DIFFERENT AS BATMAN AND BRUCE WAYNE!

THEN YOU'RE NOT REALLY IN LOVE WITH THE WOMAN, BUT--

PRECISELY, ALFRED-- I'M SIMPLY CAPTIVATED BY ONE OF HER PERSONAS.

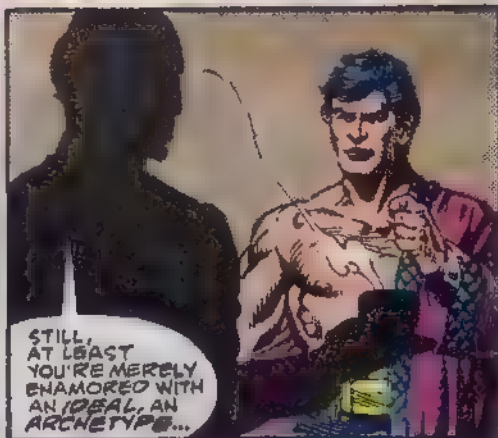
NATALIA IS THE TROUBLED WOMAN WHO KNOWS SHE'S DONE WRONG AND WHO TRIES TO ATONE FOR IT...

SHE'S THE ONE WHO SOUGHT SAVING GRACE IN THE ACT OF ADOPTING JASON-- AND IN HONORABLY PRE-SERVING MY SECRET LIFE AS THE BATMAN.

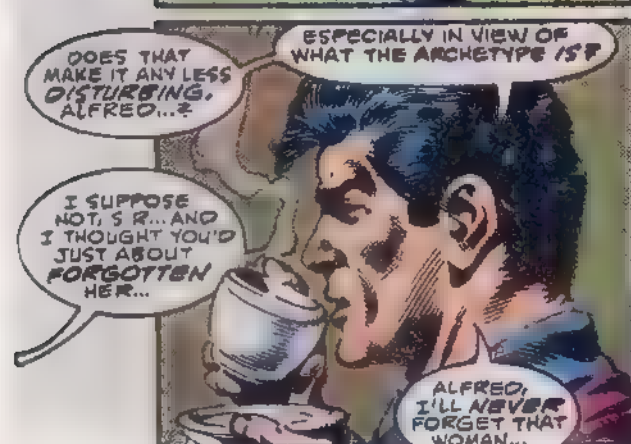


BUT NOCTURNA... SHE'S THE NIGHT, AND ALL ITS MYSTERY, APOLOGIZING FOR NONE OF IT.

THE WORST PART OF IT, OF COURSE, IS THAT IT'S THE WOMAN'S DARK AND DANGEROUS SIDE WHICH OBSSESSES ME.



STILL, AT LEAST YOU'RE MERELY ENAMORED WITH AN IDEAL, AN ARCHETYPE...

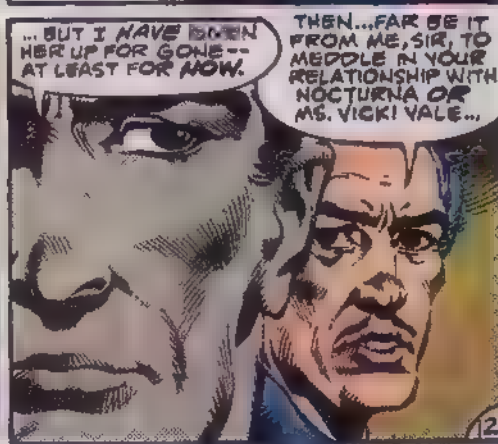


DOES THAT MAKE IT ANY LESS DISTURBING, ALFRED...?

ESPECIALLY IN VIEW OF WHAT THE ARCHETYPE IS?

I SUPPOSE NOT, SIR... AND I THOUGHT YOU'D JUST ABOUT FORGOTTEN HER...

ALFRED, I'LL NEVER FORGET THAT WOMAN...



... BUT I HAVE GIVEN HER UP FOR GONE-- AT LEAST FOR NOW.

THEN... FAR BE IT FROM ME, SIR, TO MEDDLE IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH NOCTURNA OR MS. VICKI VALE...

BUT... IF I MIGHT
PLEAD A CASE FOR
MY DAUGHTER
JULIA...

YES?

WELL... AFTER
YOU STOOD HER
UP FOR YOUR
CONCERT DATE,
SHE'S CONVINCED
YOU'RE NOT AT
ALL INTEREST-
ED, BUT--

BUT YOU
KNOW
BETTER,
OLD
FRIEND?

THERE'S NO ONE
I'D RATHER SEE
STRIKING SPARKS
WITH MY DAUGH-
TER, SIR.

ALFRED, I CONFESS
I AM INTRIGUED BY
JULIA... AND I'D LIKE
TO GET TO KNOW HER
BETTER...

...BUT I
GUESS I'VE BEEN
RELUCTANT,
GUILTY ABOUT
VICKI...

BRING

BRUCE IT'S VICKI. YOU HAD
YOUR LAST CHANCE AND YOU
FAILED TO KEEP THE DATE--

WHAT
DATE,
VICKI?

--AND WHAT
GOOD IS AN
ULTIMATUM
IF IT ISN'T
ULTIMATED?

AND SINCE
WHEN HAVE
YOU BEEN A
MATCH-
MAKER?

WAIT A MINUTE, VICKI, I DON'T
EVEN KNOW WHAT YOU'RE
TALKING ABOUT OR--

I'VE MADE UP
MY MIND, BRUCE.
WE'RE **QUITS**--
AT LEAST FOR THE
TIME BEING.

WELL, ALFRED, IT SEEMS
THAT ANY GUILT OR RE-
LUCTANCE I WAS FEELING
HAS JUST EVAPORATED--
AND R GHT ON CUE.

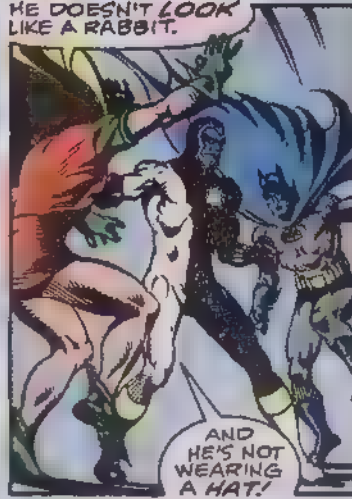
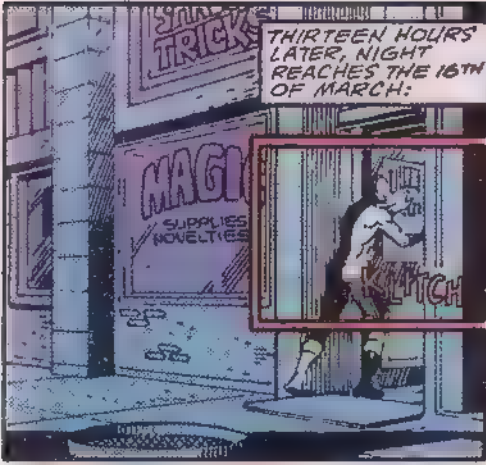
THAT'S
WONDERFUL,
SIR!

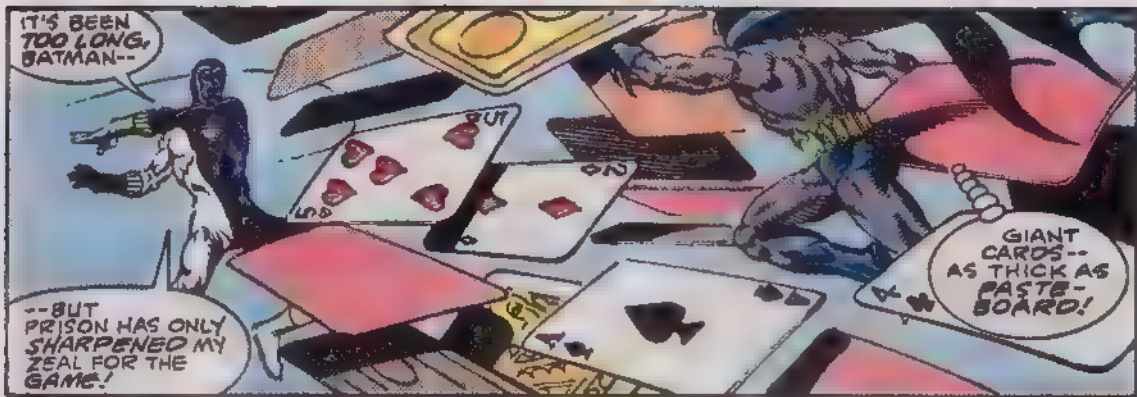
NOW IF YOU'LL
EXCUSE ME,
B L L MODELL
IS WAITING IN
THE LOBBY.

KLIK

Er... Sh...
THAT IS...
I'M SORRY
TO HEAR
YOU AND
MS. VALE
ARE HAV-
ING DIF-
FICULTIES.

...BUT ON THE OTHER
HAND, SIR, I'VE ALREADY
INVITED JULIA FOR
DINNER TOMORROW
NIGHT.







AW, SHADDUP, BUGS, BEFORE I RAM A CAR-ROT DOWN YOUR--

ROBIN-- ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

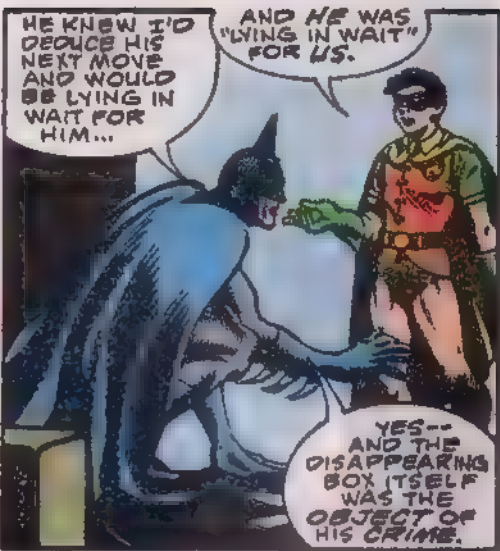
BATMAN? YEAH, I'M OKAY...

BUT YOU KNOW THAT MAGICIAN'S DIS-APPEARING BOX THAT WAS UP HERE...?



IT'S DIS-APPEARED.

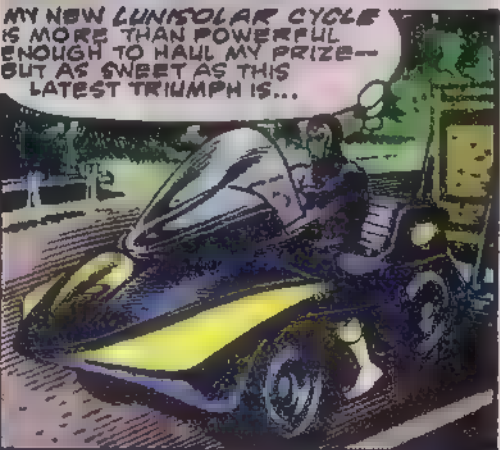
HE WAS HERE BEFORE US-- RIGGED UP THIS TRAPDOOR GAG...



HE KNEW I'D DEDUCE HIS NEXT MOVE AND WOULD BE LYING IN WAIT FOR HIM...

AND HE WAS "LYING IN WAIT" FOR US.

YES-- AND THE DISAPPEARING BOX ITSELF WAS THE OBJECT OF HIS CRIME.



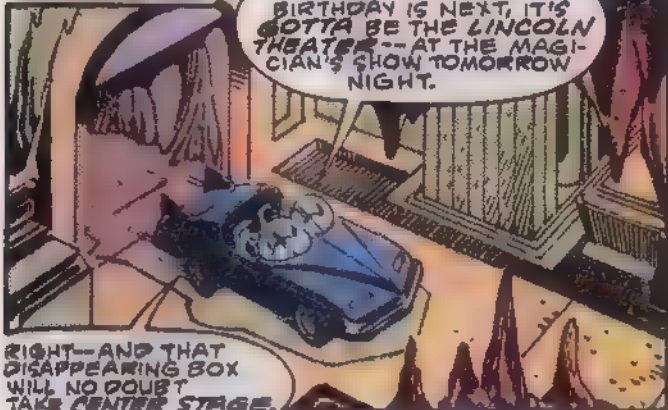
MY NEW LINCOLNAR CYCLE IS MORE THAN POWERFUL ENOUGH TO HAUL MY PRIZE-- BUT AS SWEET AS THIS LATEST TRIUMPH IS...

...IT REDUCES THE GAME BY YET AN-OTHER CRIME, AN-OTHER NIGHT, DRAWING IT EVER CLOSER TO ITS INEVITABLE CONCLUSION.



AND I MUST ADMIT... I'LL HATE TO SEE IT END WITH SUCH FINALITY!

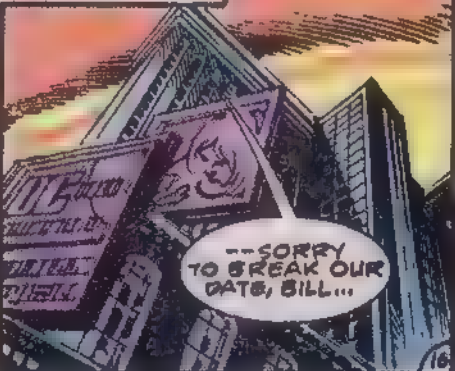
THE BATCAVE:



WELL, IF LINCOLN'S BIRTHDAY IS NEXT, IT'S GOTTA BE THE LINCOLN THEATER-- AT THE MAGICIAN'S SHOW TOMORROW NIGHT.

RIGHT--AND THAT DISAPPEARING BOX WILL NO DOUBT TAKE CENTER STAGE.

PICTURE NEWS: MORNING OF THE 17TH...



--SORRY TO BREAK OUR DATE, BILL...

...BUT I... I JUST
DON'T FEEL LIKE IT.

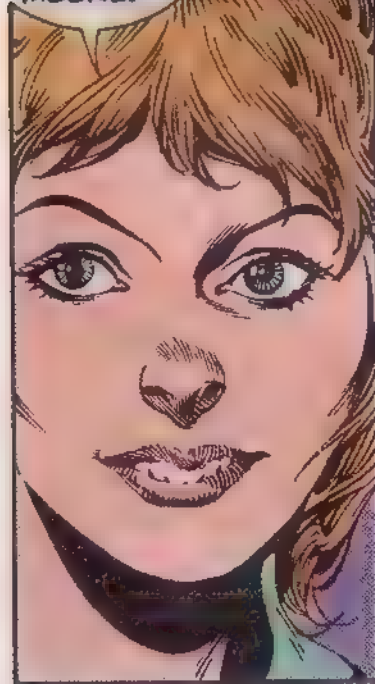
I THINK I
UNDER-
STAND,
VICKI--THE
GHOST OF
BRUCE
WAYNE
AGAIN?



PLEASE, BILL,
I'M NOT IN THE
MOOD TO DISCUSS
IT NOW. GOOD-BYE.

ACTUALLY, I'LL
PROBABLY BE
BETTER OFF
ALONE-- OR
AT LEAST WITH
NOTHING MORE
THAN A RERUN
OF MARY
TYLER
MOORE.

BUT
LISTEN,
JULIA--
YOU
HAVE
FUN,
Huh?



HERE ARE THOSE
PHOTO CONTACT
SHEETS YOU
WANTED, VICKI...

LISTEN,
JULIA--HOW
ABOUT COMING
OVER FOR DIN-
NER TONIGHT
AND LETTING
ME CRY
ON YOUR
SHOULDER?



TONIGHT?

I... I'M SORRY,
VICKI, BUT I AL-
READY HAVE AN
ENGAGEMENT...

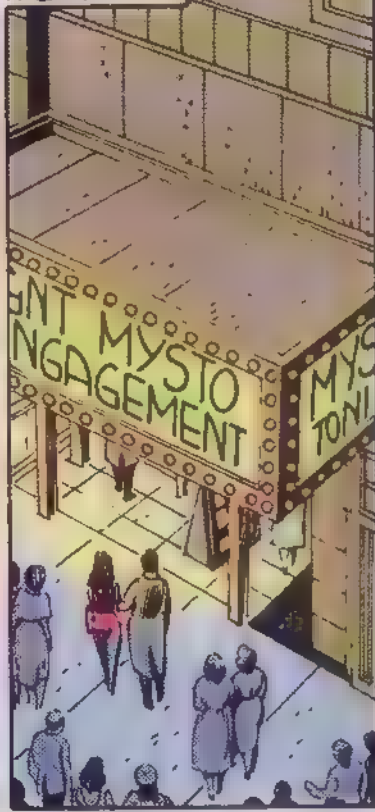
OH... I
SEE.

BUT IF IT'S
BAD, VICKI...
IF YOU REALLY
NEED SOME-
ONE TO TALK
TO... I
COULD
BREAK
IT AND--

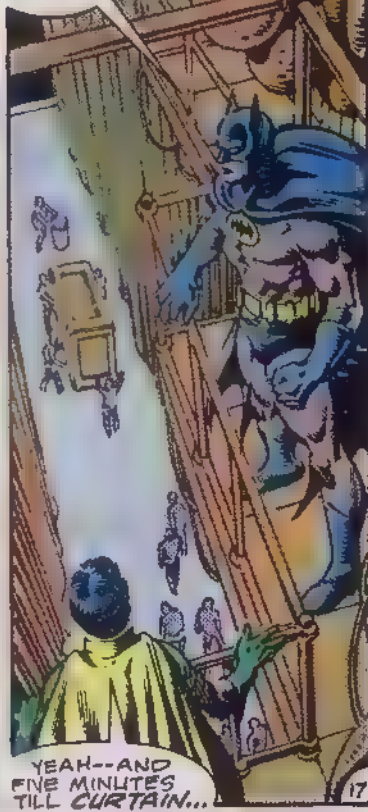


NO.

THE LINCOLN
THEATER;
NIGHT:



HERE IT
COMES,
ROBIN.

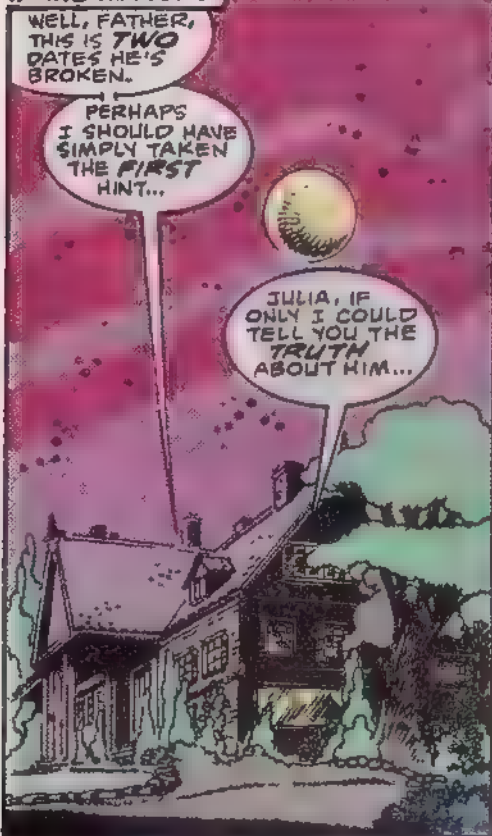


YEAH--AND
FIVE MINUTES
TILL CURTAIN...

17

CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING.

WAYNE MANOR:



WELL, FATHER, THIS IS **TWO** DATES HE'S BROKEN.

PERHAPS I SHOULD HAVE SIMPLY TAKEN THE **FIRST** HINT...

JULIA, IF ONLY I COULD TELL YOU THE **TRUTH** ABOUT HIM...

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

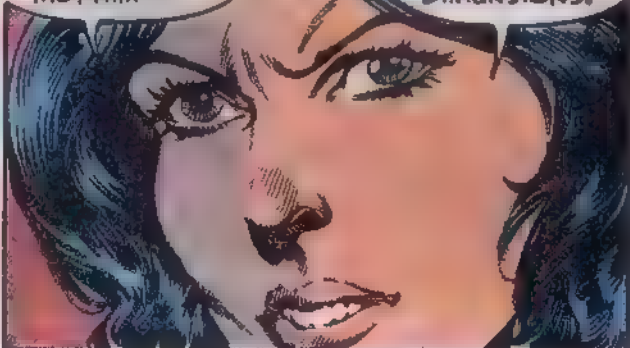
HE... HE IS A COMPLEX, MANY-SIDED MAN, AND...

THAT MUCH I KNOW.

VICKI MAY THINK OF BRUCE AS AN IRRESPONSIBLE PLAYBOY...

...BUT FROM THE MOMENT I FIRST MET HIM...

---I'VE SENSED **DEEPER** DIMENSIONS.



PERHAPS BECAUSE MS. VALE IS A PHOTOGRAPHER, JULIA, WHILE YOU'RE A WRITER.

SHE CAPTURES IMAGES OF THE **SURFACE**, BUT YOU DELVE MORE **INTENSELY** INTO THE SUBJECT AT HAND.

IN VICKI'S DEFENSE, FATHER, SHE **HAS** MADE ALLOWANCES FOR BRUCE'S BEHAVIOR.



AND TOO, AFTER LIVING HERE IN THE MANOR THOSE FIRST WEEKS AFTER COMING FROM FRANCE, I'VE HAD THE BENEFIT OF OBSERVING BRUCE MORE **INTIMATELY** AND IN **LESS** GUARDED CIRCUMSTANCES.



TRUE...

YET IF ONLY SHE KNEW...

BUT LITTLE **GOOD** IT'S DONE ME.

I'M NO CLOSER TO HIM THAN VICKI IS.



I'LL SAY ONLY ONE THING IN HIS DEFENSE, JULIA, ASKING YOU NOT TO REPEAT EVEN **THIS** MUCH...

HE HAS LEGITIMATE CAUSE FOR WHATEVER SEEMINGLY CALLOUS ACTIONS HE TAKES.

AND THE INTENSITY IN ALFRED PENNYWORTH'S EYES FORCES A CHANGE OF APPROACH.

I NOTICE JASON IS NOT HERE.

DOES THE "LEGITIMATE CAUSE" INVOLVE HIM?

YES... BUT WE'LL LEAVE IT AT THAT AND I'LL MAKE ONE FINAL REQUEST...

PLEASE... DO NOT TURN YOUR BACK OR GIVE UP ON BRUCE WAYNE JUST YET.

VERY WELL, FATHER.

THEN SHALL WE LIGHT THE CANDLES, DIM THE LIGHTS, AND...

...DINE...?

WE SHALL.

THE LINCOLN THEATER:

ARE YOU SURE THIS IS THE RIGHT BOX?

IT LOOKS THE SAME, BUT THERE SEEMS TO BE SOMETHING DIFFERENT ABOUT IT...

--BUT BEFORE SHE CAN REPLY, THE CURTAINS OPEN ON A SEA OF APPLAUSE...

THANK YOU, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN-- AND BE ASSURED THERE IS GOOD REASON FOR THE PRESENCE OF THE ARMED GUARD...

IT IS TO PROTECT THE MILLION DOLLARS EMBODIED IN THIS DIAMOND NECKLACE.

DAZZLED BY THE GLITTER, THEY OOH AND AH.

AND NOW, IF MY ASSISTANT HAS TAKEN HER PLACE IN THE BOX...

THE MAGICIAN'S ASSISTANT FROWNS--

...I SHALL PLACE THE NECKLACE AROUND HER LOVELY NECK AND CLOSE THE BOX.

WHEN IT IS NEXT OPENED--

--SHE WILL BE GONE...

...AND IN HER PLACE, WEARING A BRAND-NEW AND PRICELESS COLLAR, WILL BE A FEROCIOUS TIGER...

WRONG!

THE DIAMONDS ARE MINE, CHARLATAN!

...WHERE-UPON, OF COURSE, NO ONE WOULD DARE STEAL THE NECKLACE.

BOOM!

AND THIS IS ONE NIGHT WHEN THE DARKNESS OF THE THEATER MUST GIVE WAY TO THE BLINDING LIGHT OF THE SUN!

WITNESS: NOTHING UP MY SLEEVE AND YET--

POUM

--A SOLAR-BOMB!

AGH-H!

SCREAMING, STUMBLING, AND SCRAMBLING, THE AUDIENCE BOLTS.

CLOSE THE CURTAINS, ROBIN!

YOU GOT IT, BATMAN!

AND HAPPY LANDINGS, HUH?

I'LL DO MY WORST.

BUT CALENDAR MAN DODGES AT THE LAST SECOND--AND THE DISAPPEARING BOX TAKES THE KICK IN HIS PLACE...

BT LUMP

NOW THAT YOU'VE DEDUCED MY CALENDAR OF EVENTS, BATMAN--

--I'VE BEEN EXPECTING YOU!

POUM!

THEN, SURGING FROM THE TRAPDOOR UNDER THE OVERTURNED BOX...

DUHRRR

THEFT MAKES ANYONE MAD, BUT NOT SO FAST, KITTY-CAT...

HERE'S A NEW COLLAR FOR YOU!

IT'S BEEN
FUN,
BATMAN--

...BUT
UNTIL THEN,
FAREWELL!

--AND IT'S A PITY
OUR FINAL CON-
TEST WILL END SO
DARKLY...

CAN'T LET
HIM GET AWAY
WITH THAT
NECKLACE--

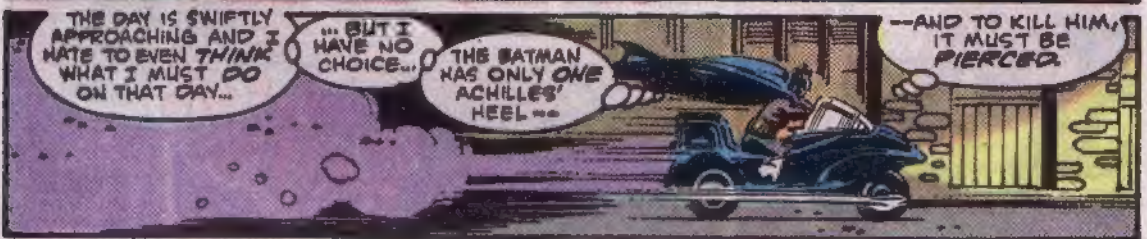
L/H, BATMAN? IT
SEEMS THIS TIGER IS
A TRIFLE MORE LIVELY
THAN CATWOMAN'S
LATE PET...

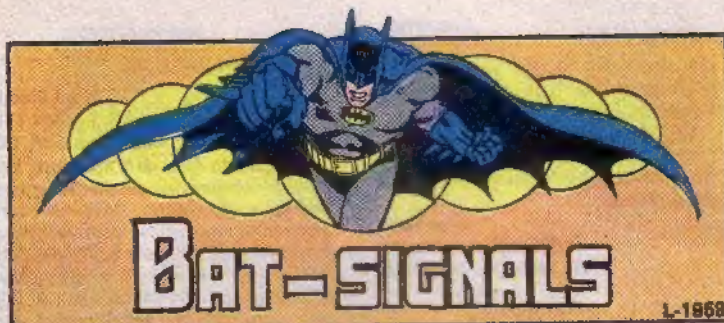


I HEARD



WAYNE MANOR:





DC Comics Inc.
666 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10103

Jenetta Kahn, President and Publisher
Dick Giordano, Vice Pres.-Executive Editor
Len Wein, Editor
Tom Condon, Managing Editor
Pat Batianna, Editorial Coordinator
Bob Rozakis, Production Manager
Joe Orlando, Vice Pres.-Editorial Director
Paul Levitz, Vice Pres.-Operations
Bruce Bristow, Marketing Director
Arthur Gutowitz, Treasurer

Dear Len,

CAMELOT 3000, ARAK, SAGA OF THE SWAMP THING, BLUE DEVIL, BATMAN #380 ... and some people wonder why I think DC's the best.

David Alan Wright
39 Howard Street
New Britain, CT 06051

We've never wondered, but thanks for the kind thought.

Dear Len,

I don't know what I liked the most about BATMAN #380. Was it the blockbuster debut of Rick Hoberg or the very welcome departure of Dr. Fang from the DC Universe?

The answer isn't difficult to perceive. One needs only peruse pages 17 and 18. In this era of "thumbnail artists" and "finishers," it's so gratifying to see a complete penciller like Rick. The depth and detail of his work is remarkable.

Killer Moth has been in a lot of montages lately, Len. When are we going to see him in solo action again?

Jeffrey Lowndes
809 Sunset Ave.
Scranton, PA 18509

Len says there are some long-range plans for the Killer Moth's return, complete with a stunning new costume. Keep reading and be patient.

Dear Len,

Wow! BATMAN #380 is an instant classic in my book, if nobody else's. Actually, I've been meaning to write for some time to express my disbelief at the continued quality of BATMAN and DETECTIVE, but after this latest issue, I could wait no longer.

The recent trend in the DC magazines that I subscribe to has been quality beyond my wildest expectations. I really feel that this latest issue is a prime example of getting more than just a comic-book type quality, but more of a type that can measure with other mediums as well. The characters are real, and developed, and (can't stress this enough) cared for by the DC personnel and it shows.

Every so often it becomes necessary to reexamine a character to understand his motivation, his credibility, and his relevance. In #380 this was done beautifully. We get reminded about what The Batman is all about and advance the story as well. Jason's

expression on the final page says a lot because he cares so much about Batman the man as well as Batman the hero ... and so do we.

As far as the plot is concerned, I think it would be interesting if Hill and his men shot Anton/Batman ... after all, he is wanted. And I hope the young lady realizes the truth about the real Batman before she is hurt as she is bound to be. She is so innocent and Batman so noble that I hope you will not play with our emotions on this tangent. However, I have faith in you.

Before I go I would like to point out that I am a college student and like all students, money is tight for me. Some people don't understand why I spend money for comics like I do. Well, if they could take the time to read #380, they would understand that for six bits, DC has to be one of the best entertainment values today.

Thank you for your attention and have a good day because you sure made mine with the latest issue.

Ken Morefield
PO Box 4552
Fredericksburg, VA

Dear Len,

I haven't read a BATMAN comic in quite some time, but for some reason I bought #380. I'm glad I did! "The End of the Bat" was an excellent story and the artwork, superb. I have a feeling this is going to be a much-talked-about issue. Thanks for the masterpiece.

Rick Steel
Cleveland, OH

Dear Len and Doug,

I must say that I have thoroughly enjoyed reading the Caped Crusader's exploits of late. The fact that he rears his pointy head every two weeks is a definite bonus. I think that you've brought back the mystery, intrigue, and general fun the Batman hasn't had in some time. Furthermore, it is one of the few nonreturnables that I carefully "read."

Anyway, for some time now I have looked for an excuse to write and tell you both how much I enjoy the two Batmags. My excuse is Rick Hoberg. I am totally knocked out by what he has done with BATMAN #380. His pencils mesh very well with Alfredo Alcalá's inks. The result is some very visually pleasing panels, and some very fine Batman in

general. I am really impressed with what he and Alfredo have done.

Please keep up the good work. I am developing a greater appreciation for DC, and BATMAN is just one of the reasons why. A well-written comic with the integrity the creators exude is a sure threat to your Marvelous competition.

Craig Paeth
4531 Vernon Drive
North Olmsted, OH 44070

Dear Len and Doug,

BATMAN #380 was the big test—and the big worry that all the readers had, proved to be not that much of a worry—the art hasn't suffered now that it's Hoberg and Alcalá. Page three proved that. Of course, there are these subtle differences: Hoberg's Batman is taller and more elongated-looking than the late Don Newton's, who drew him as a squatter, muscular powerhouse. Hoberg makes him look lithe and pantherish.

Dr. Fang's croaking doesn't perturb me greatly; Doug made him and he can break him, too. But I think the story is being stretched out too much. Issue #380 said in a whole issue what could have been said in 10 pages. And I am unimpressed with Anton Knight as a major villain; and I am beginning to be unimpressed with Nocturna after the severe softening Doug has given her over the past three installments. She's becoming mush. I'll keep reading, though. I want to see what happens to Mayor Hill and I hope it's a real Dick Tracy finish for him.

There haven't been too many affectionate words between Bruce and Jason since he came into the storyline. They're like a couple of blank pieces of cardboard together. And Jason strikes me as a boring child, there's no pep to his characterization. You've got to spruce up their relationship, once you get him back to his proper home.

Charles D. Brown
39 Stockton Street
Brentwood, NY 11717

You're being rather harsh with us this month, but not everything you've said is unfounded. Doug has been concentrating on developing and deepening the relationship between Bruce and Jason these last few issues. And we're getting to see Jason in school, with people his own age. There's a definite character brewing and from what we've seen, boring won't be the word for it.

Dear Len and Bob,

By the way #380 ended, I wouldn't be amazed if it was truly "The End of the Bat."

A) Bullock is still alive! After seeing DETECTIVE #548, I thought he was dead for sure.

B) Dr. Fang is free again. Big deal. I wouldn't be surprised if he killed Batman only because Batman is Anton Knight (only for the time being).

C) Anton is back. After this little episode I don't ever want to see him again!

D) The premiere of a new BATMAN artist... Rick Hoberg! I think I prefer his Earth-1 Batman to his Earth-2 rendition from ALL-STAR SQUADRON.

That's all for now. You'll be hearing from me either in the next issue of DETECTIVE or BATMAN. By the way, guess who I was for Halloween.

Delmo Waters Jr.
1299 Grand Concourse
Bronx, NY 10452

Dear Len and Doug,

I have just taken up the typewriter to write to my favorite comic of the week. I've been reading BATMAN since #341 and this title always seems to be rising and advancing to new heights. This issue stuck out and deserves to be praised.

All of the subplots seem to be building to an explosive ending, and unlike some of the plodding plots we get from other comics, I hope this one never ends. Bullock has slowly (the key word is *slowly*, I like a character to change over a long period of time) become a three-dimensional person whom I have come to care about. That's a nice touch, one I hope is continued. But, on to the main story.

Not in a long time has a comic kept me on edge like the sequence from pages 17-23. I was reeling from the shot and the aftermath for almost an hour after I finished reading. Also, the Nocturna/Jason plot is very well done and fresh. Let's have more plots like it.

Finally, my favorite scene in the book had to be the scenes with Tina. I actually felt myself moved to tears by the two scenes in which Anton left her and Batman came in to talk to her.

Please keep up the good work and don't be afraid to try anything you like in BATMAN.

Cory R. Strode
228 Corbin Hall
Western Illinois University
Macomb, IL 61455

Dear Doug, Rick, and Len,

Hi, this is my first letter to a comic book. I just wrote to say how much I will miss the excellent artwork of Don Newton. He and his artwork were the main reason I started reading BATMAN. He will be remembered.

I think Doug Moench is the perfect writer for Batman. Doug has never let

me down, he always writes an intelligent (and fun to read) story with the Caped Crusader.

Welcome, Rick Hoberg! What a fantastic job you did on your first issue. I will look forward to seeing your great pencils every month.

Alan Hillis
1823 Hillcrest Avenue
Salt Lake City, UT 84106

Dear DC,

This is my first letter to you, but though I have been a nonstop collector of many DC titles for quite a while, I have neglected to write for the simple reason that I never thought about it. Now you've propelled me to write and write I shall.

I have nothing negative or unpleasant to say—just the opposite. First, BLUE DEVIL is great and WORLD'S FINEST is tops, as is SUPERMAN: THE SECRET YEARS. The SUPERMAN and ACTION series allow for enjoyable variety. I really do want to comment at length, however, on the BATMAN and DETECTIVE titles. The plots that have been evolving are exciting and interesting. Issue #380 was superbly done. My main applause to Doug Moench, Alfredo Alcala, Ben Oda, Adrienne Roy, Len Wein, and brilliant newcomer Rick Hoberg for an issue well done.

While I have you, I want to compliment you on the SUPER POWERS mini-series. It was so well done that I would like to see another SUPER POWERS mini- or maxi-series, maybe drawn by Gil Kane or Michael Golden.

Jeff Grant
Cobleskill, NY

Dear Bat-People,

This is my very first letter to any comic and what better comic to write to than the one I practically cut my teeth on? Heck, my first two syllable word was "Batman."

There were several years where my interest in comics was shelved for "more important things" like chasing girls and dreaming about slick cars. Those, of course, were my years in junior and senior high school. But, through the wonderful magic of back issues, I'm back! The eight-year gap in my Bat-collection is filled and I'm a bigger fan of the Darknight Detective than I ever was before.

I have high hopes for the "new kid on the block," Rick Hoberg. His style, of course, is different from Don's but it's definitely not lacking in detail and just all-out pizzazz. Oh, and let's not forget Alfredo's incredible inks. Great stuff!

I'd be a real heel if I didn't compliment Doug's writing. His storylines have been loads of fun to follow, especially in the last few months with the Nightslayer/Nocturna saga. I've thoroughly enjoyed myself with all the tricky turns and twists in the plot.

As long as both Batman books retain such high quality, you've got me hooked

for a long time to come.

Lloyd Ferrell
PO Box 114
Grand Junction, CO

Welcome to Alan, Jeff, and Lloyd. We always welcome first-time letter writers and for some reason, BATMAN #380 inspired three of you to write. Are there many other first-timers out there, just itching to try a letter? It's really easy. And thanks for all of your comments, not only about this title but the others we work on. Jeff will be especially glad to hear that later this year we will have another SUPER POWERS mini-series featuring the creative talents of writer Paul Kupperberg, inker Greg Thackston, and showcasing the dynamic penciling of The King, Jack Kirby! It's Darkseid and his Apokolips cronies versus the combined talents of more than a dozen of DC's greatest heroes, including Superman, Batman, Dr. Fate, Firestorm, Green Arrow, Green Lantern, and the Martian Manhunter.

COMING ATTRACTIONS

When we announced our agreement to do crossover stories with First Comics last summer, we invited suggestions as to which heroes from each line should meet up. We had some serious thoughts such as Superman and Nexus and silly ideas like Teddy Q and Bat-Mite (honest!). But the overwhelming team-up was also the most natural, *Batman and Jon Sable, Freelance*. It's going to be written and drawn by former BATMAN artist Mike Grell with Len acting as consulting editor. The team-up will appear next July and is well worth waiting for.

Coming in just a week is WHO'S WHO #4 and Bat-fans will want to pick this one up to get all the facts about the Catman, Cavalier, and Catwoman—both from Earth-1 and Earth-2. All new artwork will grace Len's entries, and remember, this series is a must-have for all serious DC Comics readers.

Also this month is CRISIS ON INFINITE EARTHS #3, where the first heroes fall and things go from bad to worse. Superman and Batman look on in horror as one of their number is vaporized before their disbelieving eyes. The issue also guest-stars Batman's teammates from the Outsiders, in addition to the Teen Titans, Easy Company, the Legion of Super-Heroes, Bat Lash, Jonah Hex, Nighthawk, the Flash, the Losers, and the Haunted Tank. We kid you not, they all appear in the 26-page story plus a few others. It's the maxi-series that's shaking up the DC universe and you must not miss an issue (otherwise it gets awfully confusing).

And just to reassure you, next month we will publish BATMAN and DETECTIVE with more great stories and artwork from the regular teams. In 30 days we'll print your letters on the conclusion to the Nocturna story and the mail is reaching avalanche proportions already, and the book is barely on sale as this is typed. Until next time, keep smiling!

—Bob Greenberger